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**MAILED**

OCT 03 2011

**OFFICE OF PETITIONS**

In re Application of  
Assmus, et al.  
Application No. 09/355,149  
Filed/Deposited: 7 March, 2000  
Attorney Docket No. 2345/87

**DECISION**

This is a decision on the petition filed on 29 August, 2011, and considered pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment in the above-identified application, *in lieu* of the petition submitted on that date for revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

**NOTE:**

It appears that the Office may have mailed a Notice of Abandonment precipitously in this matter.

Rather than properly request withdrawal of the holding of abandonment properly pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) with request and fee for extension of time and the reply (here, an Appeal Brief and fee or a request for continued examination (with fee) and a submission pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of a submission, Petitioner chose instead to file a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) with fee, with a request and (authorization for) fee for extension of time and the reply (here, a request for continued examination (with fee) and a submission pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of a submission.

The Office properly considered this matter pursuant to the regulations at to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) in tandem with Petitioner's authorization for a request and fee for extension of time and Petitioner's submission of a request for continued examination (with fee) and a submission pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of a submission. (*See also:* 37 C.F.R. §1.114(d) and MPEP §706.07(h).)

Should Petitioner wish to request refund of the petition fee, Petitioner may file a request with the Office of Finance and enclose therewith a copy of this decision.

The petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **GRANTED**; the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **DISMISSED**.

As to the Request to Withdraw  
the Holding of Abandonment

*Petitioners always are directed to the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c )(I) for guidance as to the proper showing requirements for relief pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181.*

As to the Allegations  
of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects as follows:

Following the final Office action mailed on 28 July, 2010, Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly following submission of a request and fee for extension of time and a Notice of Appeal and fee on 28 January, 2011, with reply due absent extension of time on or before 28 March, 2011.

(It is noted here that the matter was extendable to Monday 29 August, 2011.)

The application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 28 March, 2011.

The Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 3 August, 2011.

On Monday 29 August, 2011, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a suggestion that there had been no delay and a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) with fee, with a request and (authorization for) fee for extension of time and a reply (here, an Appeal Brief and fee or a request for continued examination (with fee) and a submission pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of a submission.(Petitioner's proper reply to the Notice of Abandonment would have been a request withdrawal of the holding of abandonment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) with request

and fee for extension of time and the reply (here, a request for continued examination (with fee) and a submission pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of a submission.) Petitioner chose instead to file as described above. Nonetheless, the record reveals a showing consistent with the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c )(I), despite Petitioner's failure to expressly make the showing under the Rule.

The guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c )(I) provides in pertinent part as to timely filing:

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37 C.F.R. §1.10(c) through §1.10(e) and §1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as "Express Mail." A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in "Express Mail" must include an appropriate petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.10(c), (d), (e), or (g) (see MPEP §513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the "Express Mail" procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the "Express Mail" date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP §503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 C.F.R. §1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b) and MPEP §512. As stated in 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8).

37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP §512.<sup>1</sup>

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Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (*see*: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office **must** inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.<sup>2</sup>

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

### STATUTES, REGULATIONS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994). And the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a Petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application.<sup>3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *See*: MPEP §711.03(c ) (I)(B).

<sup>2</sup> *See* supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on Petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. *See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §11.18 (formerly 37 C.F.R. §10.18) to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

<sup>3</sup> *See*: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition. (Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.) Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable. Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a). And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter. Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care. (By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.)

Moreover, the Office has set forth in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) the showing and timeliness requirements for a proper showing for relief under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 in these matters.

Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of “unavoidable” delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word ‘unavoidable’ . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.<sup>5</sup>

Allegations as to the Request to  
Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) specifies the showing required and how it is to be made and supported.

Petitioner appears to have made the showing required.

As to Allegations of  
Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that the petition is moot.

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<sup>5</sup> In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a “case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account.” Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was “unavoidable.” Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition as considered pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is granted, and the 3 August, 2011, Notice of Abandonment hereby is vacated. Further, the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is dismissed as moot.

The instant application is released to the Technology Center/AU 2422 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the TC/AU in response to this decision. It is noted that all inquiries with regard to that change in status need be directed to the TC/AU where that change of status must be effected—that does not occur in the Office of Petitions.

Telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214—it is noted, however, that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2<sup>6</sup>) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



/John J. Gillon, Jr./  
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Office of Petitions

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<sup>6</sup> The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:  
§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.